

## GENERAL NOTES

**Behavior of a female Eastern Kingbird.**—On May 25, 1950, I saw a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, *Tyrannus tyrannus*, together in my study area at Pimisi Bay in central Ontario. On June 3, one of them, apparently the female, began carrying nesting materials to a telephone post that stood in a marshy spot along the highway. The other bird, apparently the male, sat on guard near by and occasionally accompanied the female on her trips to and fro. She placed the material among four insulators at the end of the horizontal crosspiece of the post. Immediately the wind flicked the material away to the ground.

Nevertheless, the female worked with great assiduity. Sometimes she succeeded in braiding a few strands of dead grasses around the insulators so that she could arrange the material, sit on it, and mold it energetically with her breast. But most often, having got thus far, she found herself molding nothing but the bare arm of the telephone post and she departed to return with another load. This unsuccessful building went on for 10 days with never-flagging energy. But at the end of this period, only an odd straw waving from the telephone post and sheaves of them scattered on the ground remained to tell of the kingbird's untiring efforts.

On June 12 she was alone and still building. It became obvious that the male had disappeared, probably the victim of a Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter striatus*, which hunted in the area. The next day the female had ceased building. She sat on the wires close to the nest-site, preened, and caught insects over the water. At one time she approached a male Red-winged Blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, whose nest was below in the reeds, uttering "chittering" notes, in the same way as she used to approach her mate. On two other occasions, one of a second pair of kingbirds was seen perched on the wires near the nest-site. But the female did not display, nor did she oppose the visits upon her territory.

On June 23, 11 days after the male disappeared, there was another kingbird perched on the wires with the female. This bird flew off northward and the female followed. But when the two were about 600 feet from the nest-site, the female turned about and came back.

Seven days after this she was still on guard by her post. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus varius*, arrived and knocked a tattoo on the post. Immediately she flew at him and chased him back into the woods.

On July 19, 37 days after she gave up nest-building, the female kingbird gave "chittering" notes when the Red-wing male flew past her as she perched on the wire. Shortly after she apparently left the neighborhood, since I no longer saw her on the territory.

Nice, in her study of the Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia* (1943. *Trans. Linn. Soc. N. Y.*, 4:216-217), emphasized that in many birds "the attachment to the nest-site and the nest may become so great as to overshadow the attachment to mate, eggs or young." In the case of this female kingbird, with neither mate, eggs, nor young, nor even a nest to embody her tie to the nest-site, she remained faithful to it and defended it to some extent throughout the approximate natural length of her nesting cycle, and on one occasion, even though tempted, she forebore leaving it. Her displays to a male bird not of her own kind, perhaps prompted by the rough similarity to her own mate in coloring, size, and fluttering territorial flights, no doubt was a consequence of an unusual situation.—LOUISE DE KIRILINE LAWRENCE, *Rutherford, Ontario, July 20, 1952.*